# Using the Alaska Career Ladder:
Finding Opportunities for Advancement
to a Goal Occupation

The Alaska Career Ladder is a useful tool for finding potential entry-level or intermediate occupations for advancement *to* a goal occupation. For example, let's say Ryan is exploring Budget Analysts as a potential goal occupation and wants to find a good place to start.

From the Alaska Career Ladder home page, Ryan would click on the green "Choose an Occupation" button and select Budget Analyst from the list of occupations:
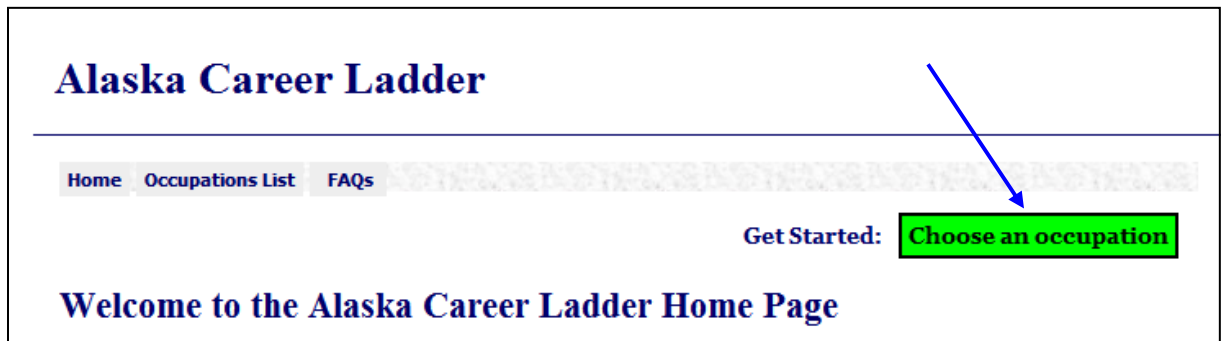
The career ladder for Budget Analysts is displayed. The Budget Analysts occupation appears in the widest box at the center of the ladder (1). The occupation that appears in this box is referred to as the "Target Occupation". Those occupations that appear below the Target Occupation box (2) will be the ones Ryan will focus on to find an occupation that may lead him toward his goal.
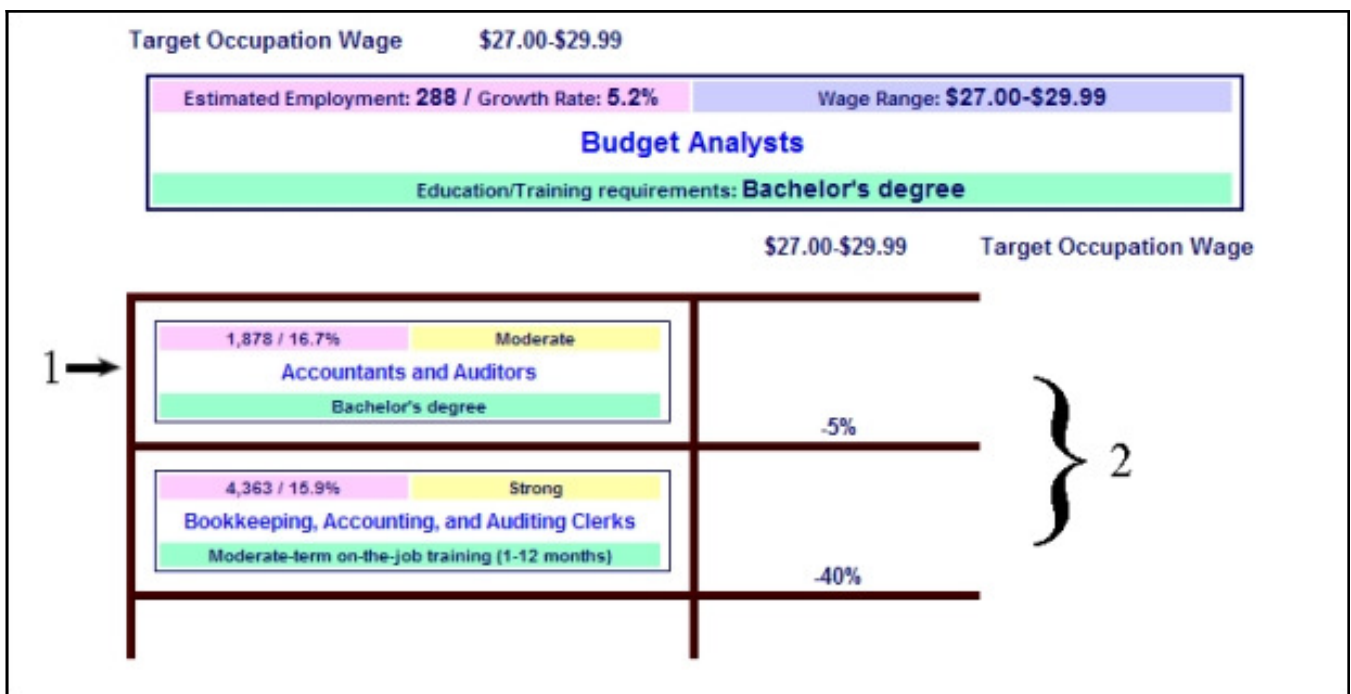
All of the occupations on a career ladder page are linked to the Target Occupation, but they are not necessarily linked to *each other* and do not imply that each level must be traversed to attain the target job. For example, without any additional information, Ryan should not assume that Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks (on the bottom rung) are linked to Accountants and Auditors (next rung up). Ryan could click on the Accountants and Auditors title to bring up that occupation's career ladder to see if it is directly linked to Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks. This would indicate that it might be a good intermediate step for making it to his goal occupation (more on this later).
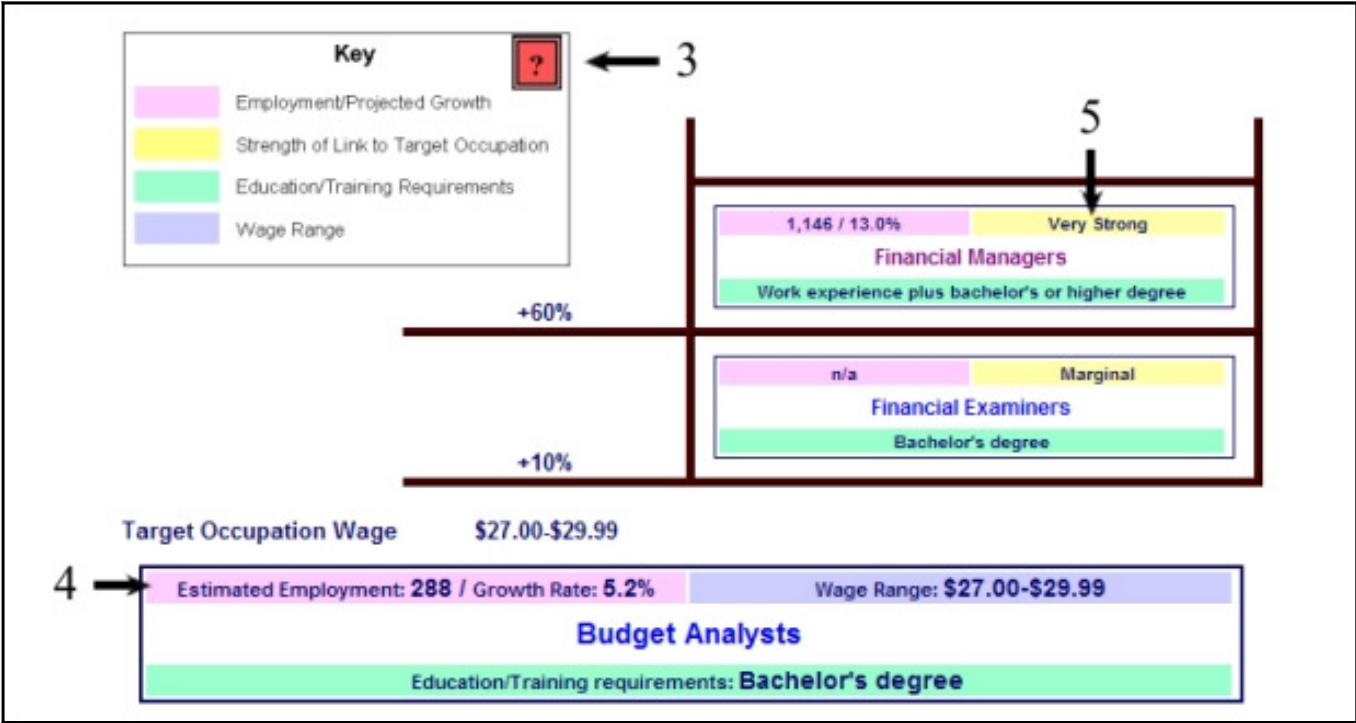
Key to the color-shaded areas: Each occupation box contains three color-shaded areas containing information about the occupation. The key to the color-coding is given in the box at the upper left of the career ladder (3).

The pink shaded area contains the **Alaska employment estimate for 2006 and the projected employment growth** from 2006-2016 (4).

The yellow-shaded area is the **Strength of the Link to the Target Occupation** (5). Strength of Link to the Target Occupation is based on our analysis of the movement of workers to or from the Target Occupation and the relevancy of the two occupations to one another. It is on a 4-level scale, ranging from "Marginal" to "Very Strong".

The Strength of Link rating should be an important consideration for Ryan when assessing alternative paths of advancement to his goal occupation. Those with a "Strong" or "Very Strong" rating show a definite history of advancement to the Target Occupation and are generally preferable to occupations with a lower rating.

Those rated "Very Strong" have shown very clear movement in one direction (to the Target Occupation for an occupation below the Target Occupation's level and from the Target Occupation for an occupation above the level of the Target Occupation). These occupations often showed the highest rate of movement compared with all other occupations associated with the Target Occupation. The occupation is clearly and directly relevant to the Target Occupation.

Those rated "Strong" also showed convincing evidence of one-way movement of workers in the direction indicated by the ladder rungs, but not as exclusively as those rated "Very Strong". These occupations are directly relevant at least in some important aspect(s) to the Target Occupation. In the Budget Analysts example, the Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks occupation is rated "Strong" and should be an excellent starting point for Ryan.

Those rated "Moderate" showed evidence of a likely link to the Target Occupation, but the movement of workers over the period studied was not as clear-cut as those rated higher; in some cases, these occupations may be less directly related than those with a higher rating. In the Budget Analysts example, the Accountants and Auditors occupation is rated "Moderate". Even though our data showed movement from Accountants and Auditors to Budget Analysts was not as strong as it was for Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks, Ryan should not dismiss it. It is obviously relevant to both occupations and it may still be a necessary or useful intermediate step for achieving his goal.

Those rated "Marginal" had enough movement to or from the Target Occupation to warrant consideration or were the best possible fit, but the data was not conclusive, and/or the relevancy to the Target Occupation was questionable or too indirect to show a definitive relationship. In some cases, the occupations are clearly related "on paper" and are at different wage levels, but the "real world" data over the period studied did not convincingly support the assumed relationship.
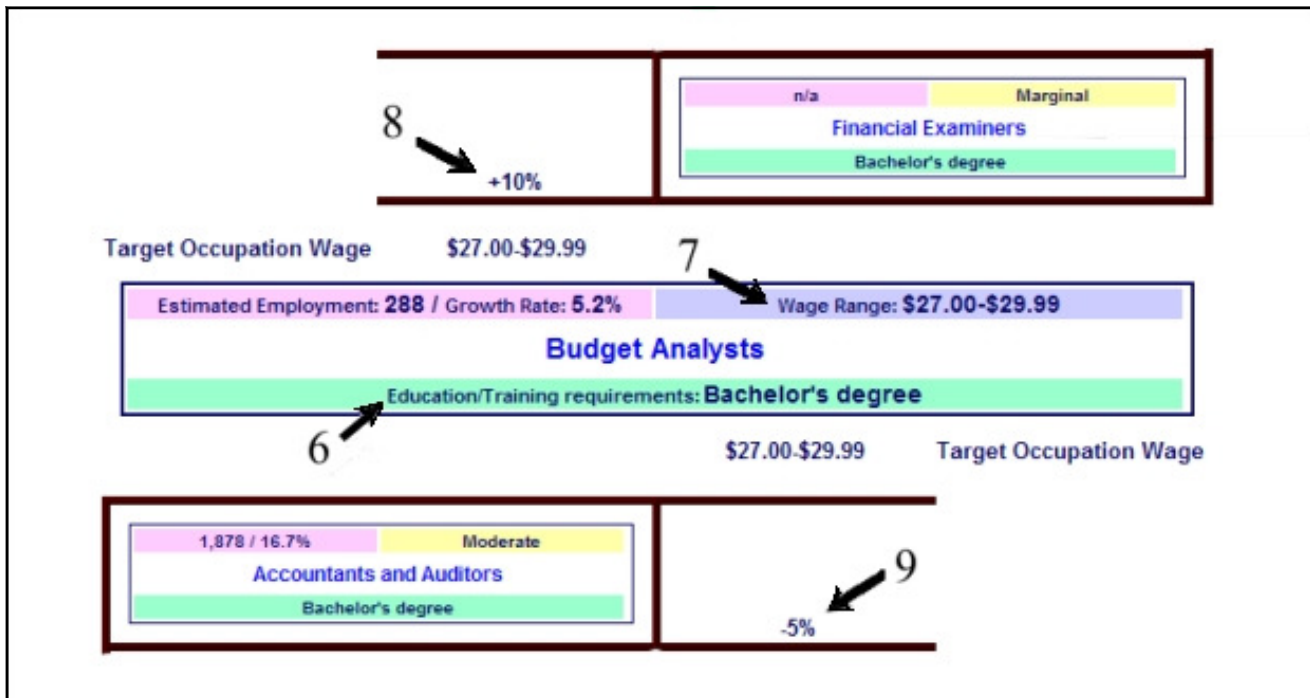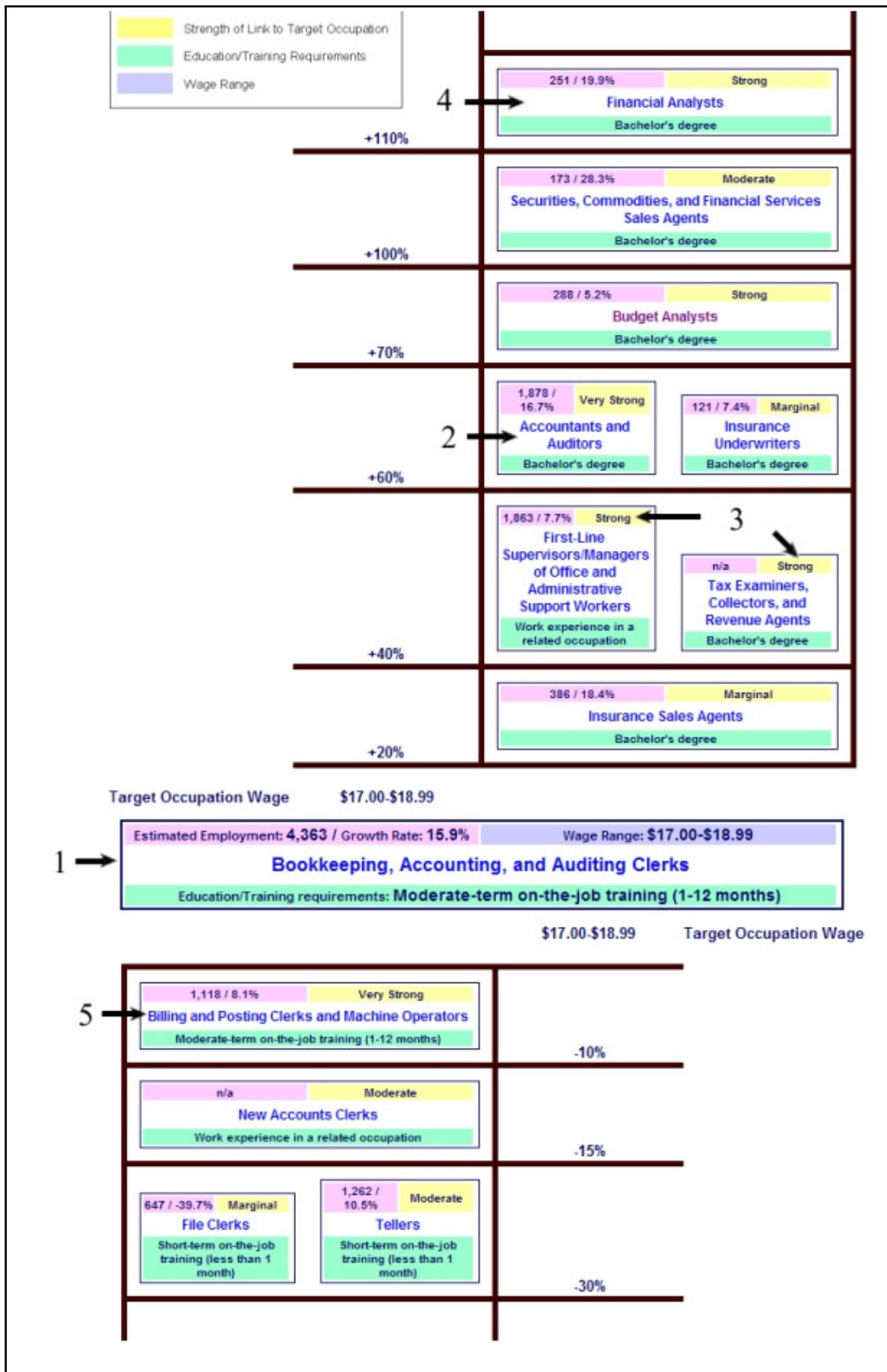
The green-shaded area gives the **Education/Training** requirements for the occupation (6). It would be important for Ryan to compare the education/training requirements of his goal occupation to the career ladder occupation he is considering. In many cases movement up the ladder may require additional education or training. In Ryan's case, he should not assume that experience as a Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerk would be sufficient to advance to a Budget Analyst position, since a Bachelor's Degree is typically required to become a Budget Analyst.

Wage level scales:

The purple-shaded area in the Target Occupation box gives the estimated wage range for the Target Occupation (7) and the scales to the left or right of the occupations on the career ladder (8 and 9) give the approximate percent difference in wages compared to the Target Occupation. In the Budget Analysts example, by looking at the wage scale, Ryan can see that Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks make about 40% less than Budget Analysts. Whenever there is more than one occupation on the same rung, it means their wages are similar and the percent value difference from the Target Occupation is an average of the occupations on the rung.

After finding an occupation of interest: Now, let's say Ryan decides he might want to consider Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks for an entry-level position to work toward his goal of becoming a Budget Analyst. He can click on the occupation title and pull up the career ladder page for Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks. Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks will now appear in the central Target Occupation box (1) and occupations leading to and from it appear below and above it.

4 →

251 / 19.9% — Strong
Financial Analysts
Bachelor's degree

+110%

173 / 28.3% — Moderate
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents
Bachelor's degree

+100%

288 / 5.2% — Strong
Budget Analysts
Bachelor's degree

+70%

1,878 / 16.7% — Very Strong
Accountants and Auditors
Bachelor's degree

121 / 7.4% — Marginal
Insurance Underwriters
Bachelor's degree

+60%

2 →

1,863 / 7.7% — Strong
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administrative Support Workers
Work experience in a related occupation

3

n/a — Strong
Tax Examiners, Collectors, and Revenue Agents
Bachelor's degree

+40%

386 / 18.4% — Marginal
Insurance Sales Agents
Bachelor's degree

+20%

Target Occupation Wage $17.00-$18.99

1 →

Estimated Employment: **4,363** / Growth Rate: **15.9%**   Wage Range: **$17.00-$18.99**
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
Education/Training requirements: **Moderate-term on-the-job training (1-12 months)**

$17.00-$18.99   **Target Occupation Wage**

5 →

1,118 / 8.1% — Very Strong
Billing and Posting Clerks and Machine Operators
Moderate-term on-the-job training (1-12 months)

-10%

n/a — Moderate
New Accounts Clerks
Work experience in a related occupation

-15%

647 / -39.7% — Marginal
File Clerks
Short-term on-the-job training (less than 1 month)

1,262 / 10.5% — Moderate
Tellers
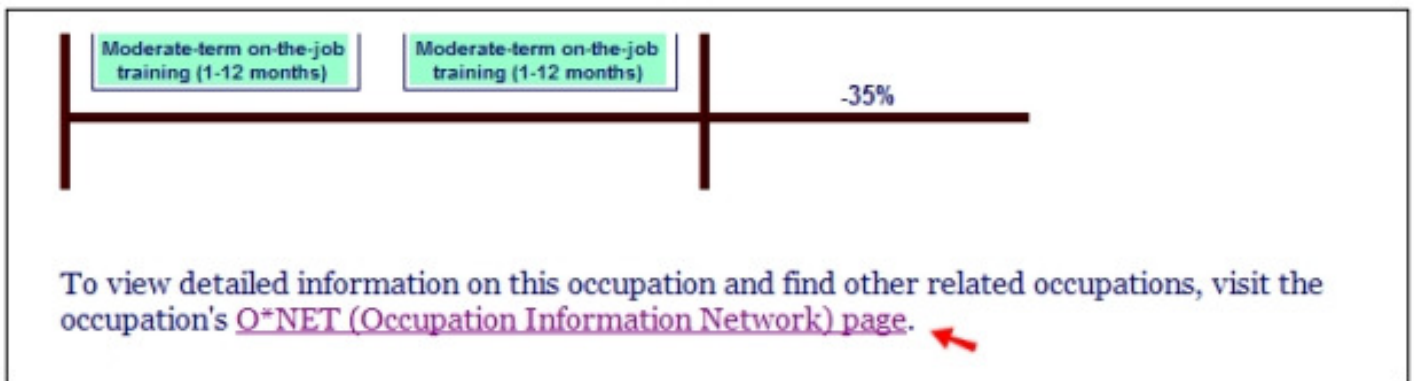Short-term on-the-job training (less than 1 month)

-30%

Here he can see which (if any) of the other occupations that were linked to Budget Analysts also appear on the Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks career ladder page.

On the Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks page, he can see that Accountants and Auditors (2) that showed a "moderate" link to Budget Analysts on the Budget Analysts career ladder page is also strongly linked to Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks. Accountants and Auditors might be a good intermediate step toward his goal of becoming a Budget Analyst.

Ryan also notices that, besides Budget Analysts, there are a lot of other opportunities for advancement from Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks that he wasn't thinking about before. He sees that there are strong links to Tax Examiners, Collectors, and Revenue Agents and Office Supervisors/Managers (3); and Financial Analysts (4). There are also a number of other upward links rated as "moderate".

Ryan also sees that there are some occupations that appear below Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks, and that "Billing and Posting Clerks and Machine Operators" is very strongly linked to Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks (5). This might be an excellent place to start if he didn't think he was quite ready for a Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerk job.

Finding additional information about an occupation: To find additional detailed information about an occupation, Ryan can visit its O*NET (Occupation Information Network) page by clicking on the link below the occupation's career ladder. The O*NET page provides related occupations (at the bottom of the page), descriptions, job tasks and skills, number of years of experience required and more. Let's say that Financial Analysts (4) caught Ryan's eye and he wanted to know more about that occupation. He could click on the title to go to the Financial Analysts career ladder page, scroll to the bottom of the career ladder and click on the O*NET link.

Moderate-term on-the-job training (1-12 months)   Moderate-term on-the-job training (1-12 months)   -35%

To view detailed information on this occupation and find other related occupations, visit the occupation's O*NET (Occupation Information Network) page.

The O*NET web page for Financial Analysts would appear.

Top Section of the O*NET web page for Financial Analysts

o·net®

O*NET OnLine

Occupational Information Network ▼

Related Sites • OnLine Help • Home

Occupation Quick Search: [_____] [Go] [?]

InDemand

Summary Report for:
13-2051.00 - Financial Analysts

Conduct quantitative analyses of information affecting investment programs of public or private institutions.

Sample of reported job titles: Financial Analyst, Securities Analyst, Investment Analyst, Equity Research Analyst, Credit Products Officer, Operational Risk Analyst, Planning Analyst, Research Analyst, Real Estate Analyst

View report: | Summary | Details | Custom |

Tasks | Tools & Technology | Knowledge | Skills | Abilities | Work Activities | Work Context | Job Zone | Interests | Work Styles | Work Values | Related Occupations | Wages & Employment

Tasks

- Assemble spreadsheets and draw charts and graphs used to illustrate technical reports, using computer.
- Analyze financial information to produce forecasts of business, industry, and economic conditions for use in making investment decisions.
- Maintain knowledge and stay abreast of developments in the fields of industrial technology, business, finance, and economic theory.
- Interpret data affecting investment programs, such as price, yield, stability, future trends in investment risks, and economic influences.
- Monitor fundamental economic, industrial, and corporate developments through the analysis of information obtained from financial publications and services, investment banking firms, government agencies, trade publications, company sources, and personal interviews.
- Recommend investments and investment timing to companies, investment firm staff, or the investing public.
- Determine the prices at which securities should be syndicated and offered to the public.
- Prepare plans of action for investment based on financial analyses.
- Evaluate and compare the relative quality of various securities in a given industry.
- Present oral and written reports on general economic trends, individual corporations, and entire industries.

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Tools & Technology

Tools used in this occupation: